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THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

DECEMBER 1st, 1854.

Music in this Number.

CHRISTMAS.

The Music by G. A. MACFARREN. The Words by LEIGH HUNT.

MOZART'S MASSES. THE REQUIEM.

Contributed by E. HOLMES.

(Continued from page 178.)

A COMPOSITION of impetuous character, full of movement and agitation, entirely changing the style of the previous music, meets us at the second piece, "Dies iræ." This is a symphonic chorus for voices and instruments, on the subject of the last judgment. The moment seized by Mozart for his unearthly and tremendous music-painting is when universal nature is dissolving, and mankind are trembling on the brink of their eternal destiny. The restless and constant motion of the orchestra depicts the distraction and confusion of the scene; and, intermingled with the instruments, the voices from time to time throw out wild cries of distress and exclamations of horror and despair.

It is remarkable, that notwithstanding music has so great a power in the expression of softness, gentleness, and beauty, nothing in it takes such hold of the imagination as a wild and fearful picture of this kind, struck off with a resolute pencil. We forget in *Don Giovanni* all the voluptuous beauty of its melody, in the terrors of the supper scene in the last act; and in the *Requiem*, the grand and distinctive mark of the composition as a work of poetry, first stands out in the chorus "Dies iræ." Mozart owes nothing to his predecessors in this movement; no artifice of science, no elaborated plans of harmony, or premeditated subjects of counterpoint, lend their aid; the effect is modern, and his own, produced by simple means, and at a blow.

The concentration of force obtained in simplicity is indeed often exemplified in the great effects of Handel's oratorios, as well as other precursors of the composer; but Mozart's advantage is so great in the orchestra, and in that peculiar career of modulation, which was in him a transcendent and overwhelming power, that in compositions of pure imagination begun without a model—he seems himself to have left a model to all times. The advance of symphony music and orchestral effect, which depended upon him, and was the business of his life, gave redoubled energy to his choral inspirations. The trumpets and the violins do a different duty in his scores to

those of other composers; the vigour and effect of the accompaniments often suspend the breath of the auditor in delight and admiration. And yet, in the midst of the most rapid and fiery invention, clearness and simplicity prevail,—a thoughtful adaptation of means to ends, comprehending the minutest, as well as the largest things, distinguishes his music and bids us know the master.

The simplicity and concentration of the parts in the opening of the "Dies iræ," are adapted to a great effect. The voices all speak together, and on vibrating sonorous notes:—

Allegro assai.

Vio. 1.
Vio. 2.
Canto.
Alto.
Tenore.
Basso.
Di - es i - ræ,
Viola.
Bassi.
Di - - - es il - la.

Incessant vigorous motion of the instruments, combined with dramatic exclamations of the chorus, give a modern orchestral character to this piece, and show plainly a hand practised in the greatest effects of the Opera and Symphony. The rapid and bold modulations have a poetical agitation and fury which have never been attained even in the musical drama; we are placed as it were in the midst of the torrent and whirlwind of sound. The change from the dominant of D minor to F, on the words "Quantus tremor est futurus," is of tremendous energy:—

Vio. 1, 2.
Viola.
Corno di Bassetto.
Fag.
Bassi.

Chorus.
Quan - - - tus,
Chorus.
Quan - - - tus,

When these words come over again after "Teste David cum Sybilla," the modulation is more startling still, and the interest of the hearer is augmented. We are hurried on breathlessly from the dominant of A minor to C minor; music has no more surprising change, aided as this is by the rapidity of the movement. The passage is introduced by a progression in A minor:—

Tes - te Da - vid cum Sy - byl - la.
Bassi.

following which, occurs this intervening bar of symphony, and then the voices with startling abruptness enter on the chord of C minor:—

Vio. 1.
Vio. 2.
Corni di Bassetto.
Chorus.
Quan - tus
Chorus.
Bassi.
Quan - tus

All the changes and contrasts are produced by the bursts of extraordinary chords, and not by *piano* and *forte*. There is not a single indication of *piano* throughout; the music begins loud and continues so. The same words are again uttered in a powerful unison of the Basses, and from this place the music takes the character of a double chorus, the choirs separating and uniting:—

Treble.
Alto.
Tenor.
Bass.
Di - es
Quan-tus tre-mor est fu - tu-rus.
i - ræ, di - es - il - la.

This portentous dramatic exclamation is repeated three times. On the last occasion the Basses remain on B flat, and their phrase is harmonized and imitated by all the voices. This is the highest effect of terror in the chorus—the earth itself seems to shake in the sounds of this grand and original passage:—

Treble.
Alto.
Tenor.
Bass.
Quan-tus tre-mor est fu - tu - rus

Altogether this composition may be looked upon as an opening in that new department of symphony music, choral and instrumental,—dramatic yet leaving the drama to the imagination,—which Beethoven and Hector Berlioz have successfully brought before modern hearers. It is a species of composition in which the voices are powerful accessories, not always principal agents. They utter the text, and stamp the scene with fidelity on the mind, but the agitation and terror expressed in the picture are mainly the work of the orchestra. As the opera of the day seems pretty well exhausted, and little in it commands attention, except it be served up in the most luxurious style of dress and decoration, it will be well for music if dramatic effect should hereafter be chiefly absorbed by the choral symphony, which is a nearly untrodden and a great field of music. The more audiences learn to exert imagination in listening, unassisted by the material appliances of the scene, the better it will be for music, which might be cultivated magnificently at less than half the expense entailed upon it when burthened with the heavy responsibilities of the theatre.

It is a prejudice scarcely yet obsolete, that voices whenever used with instruments should always be principal. This was formerly a main article of the musical creed of the Italians. It astonished and offended them that Mozart used voices to accompany; yet employing them often in this capacity he enlarged the scope of vocal effects, and greatly extended the powers of both voices and instruments. The practice of composers up to the present day confirms the justice of his views, and the principles of musical effect which he established. Mozart's short career seems even less wonderful in respect to the number and quality of his works, than in regard to their after influence on styles of music, and this we are now beginning fully to comprehend.* The "Tuba

* Looking once more over the orchestral score of the "Dies iræ," it occurs to us that the drums are the only instrument which Mozart has written for in a somewhat old-fashioned conventional manner. In other portions of the *Requiem*, and in the slow opening of the overture to *Don Giovanni*, they are displayed with prominence and happy effect: but, generally speaking, the poetry of the instrument could not have greatly occupied his mind, or he would have created in his compositions occasions to display it. The greatest

mirum" is a composition which has been censured by a late German critic as partly too secular in its style. This music is eminently the music of imagination and it must be judged in the spirit in which it was conceived. From the chorus in D minor, rapid in movement and expressing alarm and agitation, we enter upon an *Andante* in B flat, which is a series of solos ending in a quartett: the Bass introduced by a trombone solo, of tremendous and awful character:—



the Tenor solo in F minor and the Alto solo in D minor pathetic, and the Soprano solo in B flat of singular sweetness; its melody being most grateful to the ear from contrast with what has preceded. The gradations by which this change of expression is achieved show the profoundest art. The ear is prepared for every change by fine degrees, and arrives at length at the consummate elegance of melody. The air begun by the Soprano, is shadowed forth in the bassoon accompaniment to the first Bass solo; and this *cantabile* might have been too pleasing and tuneful for the occasion, had not the great intervals, and the solemn declamation of the Bass voice, preserved the majesty of the passage:—



Notwithstanding the accompanying melody, the entire effect is extremely solemn, and the distant intervals, the octaves and tenths, in which the Bass voice pursues its course at "per sepulchra, regionum," are sublimely imagined as though addressing the assembled world.

The Tenor solo has a tearful and penitential character, and the bassoon plays a great part in

effects of the drums in modern times have been heard in passages *sotto voce* or *pianissimo*, with curious tunings and combinations—such as the tuning to an imperfect fifth, in the introduction to the second act of *Fidelio*, the stroke *contra tempo* on A♭, in the opening of the overture to the *Freischütz*, and the rolls *pianissimo* on several drums, tuned in different keys, in some parts of the *Requiem* of Berlioz, the effect of which is described by those who have heard it as like distant thunder. Limited to a few sounds and effects, drums well introduced, and in their distinctive character, still mark the greatest opportunities in music. In passages of a dark and mysterious expression nothing can replace them; and when, as in the slow movement of the symphony in B♭ of Beethoven, they suddenly take up the notes of the subject *pianissimo*, the hearer is delighted at one of the most delicate and happily-imagined effects of the orchestra

it in holding notes. The solo is particularly admirable from the change to G minor to the end:—



A singular and delicate effect is produced by the sustained notes of the bassoon in the most effective part of its scale. In song passages this instrument rarely *tells*, except the melody be doubled above by higher instruments—flute, clarinet or oboe, or violins,—but in holding notes in the orchestra its powers are universally acknowledged. In this instance it balances the middle part of the harmony, and brings out the expressive *appoggiatura* of the voice part, which would else be wanting.

The accompaniments to the Alto and Soprano solos are thin, being by the stringed instruments alone in iterated notes, probably in anticipation of the rich and beautiful cadence which is to come. From time to time we observe traces of the composer's last labours. In the "Dies iræ" we were reminded of passages in the grand aria of the Queen of Night, in the *Zauberflöte*; here a little middle phrase brings back the first duet in *La Clemenza di Tito*. The two violins fill up the remnant of a bar, and then lead to a little broken melody, which expresses trepidation and uncertainty in a most remarkable and original manner. The voice seems unable to proceed, but the instruments go on and then it joins in with them again:—



These wavering and hesitating notes perfectly express the thought, "cum vix justus sit securus;" there is also a religious and confiding expression, gathering strength as it proceeds, which mingles with the dramatic effect, and produces one of the most original and beautiful passages in all music:—

Vio. 1.

Canto.
Alto.

Tenore
Basso.

Sotto voce.

Cum vix jus - tus

Vio. 2.
Viola.

f p

Fag.

jus-tus. Bassi.

Voices.

sit se - cu - - rus.

This has been blamed; but certainly they cannot be very well read in the meaning of sounds, who call it operatic. Such music cannot be classed under any of the known styles, sacred or secular, nor is it an echo of anything which Mozart has elsewhere done. It is a peculiar inspiration of the composer, adapted to its place in the *Requiem* and no other: it expresses in music a pious rapture and a confidence in death in the same spirit in which old Catholic painters have shown us saints in the ecstasy of celestial vision. The whole passage should be carefully read. In the concluding cadence, the voices first loud then soft, then gathering strength in a *crescendo* and ending loud, produce the effect of a blaze of light in painting. The poetry of the thing is an attempt to open heaven in sounds; and the sweetness of the melody is celestial.

The musician who analyzes the passage will discover melodious phrases of great length and unusual rhythm, a blending of voices and instruments wholly new, harmonies and *appoggiature* the most expressive—altogether the finished work of genius. Even the last lingering sounds have a beauty of their own, and the ear subsides unwillingly into silence.

Vio. 1.

Vio. 2.

Viola.

Basso.

p

(To be continued.)

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Musical Student would much oblige the Editor, by allowing him a sight of the vocal score of Handel's *Messiah*, which he speaks of. The pieces in the Appendix went into disuse in Handel's time.

Jean Gwillt. The full score of Haydn's *Creation* justifies your Conductor in his reading of the passage. But on all occasions it is advisable that a Conductor's fiat in the Orchestra should be submitted to without demur; more especially when the Conductor is of such acknowledged standing as the gentleman in question.

T. W. Respectfully declined.

Brief Chronicle of the last Fortnight.

HULL VOCAL SOCIETY.—The general annual meeting of this society took place on the 17th of November, and was most numerous and respectfully attended. The officers for the ensuing year were chosen, and the treasurer's accounts duly audited and passed, leaving a very handsome balance in his hands. Henry Blundell, Esq., in the chair. Rev. J. H. Bromby, M.A., president; Mr. George Parker, treasurer. Committee—Mr. J. Loft, Mr. H. C. Gleadow, Mr. J. Hare Gibson, Mr. Isaac Thomas, and Mr. Adam Kenningham.—*Hull Advertiser*.

CHESTER.—The Lay Clerks of Chester Cathedral gave their benefit concert on the 7th of November. Mr. H. V. Lewis, of Liverpool, presided at the pianoforte. The numerous audience included the Marquis of Westminster and family; the Mayor; the Bishop's wife and family; the Dean, Canon Hilyard, and many of the clergy with their families; and the principal families of the neighbourhood. This is as it should be—evincing a well-merited public appreciation of as respectable and well-conducted a body of vicars-choral as could perhaps be found in any Cathedral in the land. It is to be hoped that the Cathedral Commission and the Church Commissioners together will place all such useful members of Cathedral bodies on a scale of remuneration much more adequate, and more in accordance with the original intentions of the founders of the endowments.—*Liverpool Mail*.

WALTON, NORFOLK.—The Mutual Improvement Society celebrated their fifth Anniversary on the 9th of November.

WHITTINGTON CLUB.—The steady progress made by this useful and agreeable Institution is gratifying to record. The Concert Class gave a public entertainment on the 13th of November.

LIVERPOOL.—The Collegiate Choral Union held their first private Concert on the 2nd of November: Conductor, Mr. Crowe.

DARLINGTON.—An unusual entertainment for this place was provided by Messrs. Watson and Co., on the 6th of November, in the shape of a grand Evening Concert; at which Madame Clara Novello, Mr. Sims Reeves, and the Madrigal Union appeared.

DURHAM.—Mr. J. Smith announced an Evening Concert on the 7th of November, in the beautiful Town-hall built by Bonomi, for which he engaged Madame Clara Novello, Mr. Sims Reeves, and the Madrigal Union. The demand for tickets was so much in excess of the accommodation, that the same artistes appeared at a Morning Concert on the 8th, which was equally well attended.

EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW.—Two Concerts were given on the 9th and 11th of November, by Madame Clara Novello, and the other Concert-artistes engaged by Mr. Beale, at Edinburgh. The same party appeared at the City Hall, Glasgow, on the intervening day.

THE LIMEHOUSE CHORAL SOCIETY have commenced their season with Handel's Oratorio of *Samson*.

THE DALSTON AMATEUR CHORAL UNION held their second public night on the 15th of November.

WAKEFIELD.—The Church Institution gave a public Concert, at which Miss Mountain (Leeds), Mr. Lambert (York), and Mr. Dyson (Windsor), were the vocalists. Mr. J. W. Phillips presided at the pianoforte.

GERMANY.—Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* has been recently given with great success at Berlin, on the king's birth-day, in the Kaufmannskirche, which was lighted up in honour of the occasion. Handel's *Samson* has also been performed at Ulm, to an audience of 4,000 people.